

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the very thorough consideration given the present application.

Claims 1 and 3-19 are now present in this application. Claims 1, 4 and 10 are independent.

Amendments have been made to claims 1, 3-13, claim 2 has been canceled and claims 14-19 have been added. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Restriction

The Examiner has made a requirement for restriction between the following groups of claims:

Group I: Claims 1-3, drawn to an apparatus; and

Group II: Claims 4-13, drawn to a method;

In order to comply with the Examiner's Restriction Requirement, Applicants provisionally elect to prosecute Group I, directed to claims 1, 3, 14 and 15, for prosecution in the present application. Applicants reserve the right to file a Divisional application directed to the non-elected claims at a later date, if so desired.

This requirement for restriction is respectfully traversed for the reasons set forth below.

Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner has failed to meet the required burden of showing that the groups of claims are independent and distinct, as required by law. 35 USC §121 specifically states that the Commissioner may require the application to be restricted if it contains two or more "independent and distinct" inventions claimed in one application. 37 CFR §1.141 and §1.142 further repeat the language that the two or more inventions must be "independent and distinct".

MPEP §802.01 provides specific definitions of the meaning of the terms "independent" and "distinct". MPEP §802.01 states that the terms "independent" and "distinct" do not mean the same thing, but in fact have very different meanings. The term "independent", as set forth in MPEP §802.01, means that "there is no disclosed relationship between the two or more subjects

disclosed, that is, they are unconnected in design, operation, or effect". The term "distinct" means that "two or more subjects as disclosed are related, for example, as combination and part (sub-combination) thereof, ... and are patentable over each other".

The Examiner has set forth various reasons why the inventions are "distinct" from one another, by providing separate classifications for the groups, and by stating reasons why the groups are related. However, the Examiner has not met the burden of proving that the groupings are "independent" as required by the United States Code, the Code of Federal Regulations, and the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure. Further, Applicants respectfully submit that any policy set forth in the MPEP which conflicts with the requirements for both independence and distinctness is superseded by the directives of the United States Code and the Code of Federal Regulations, which specifically require both independence and distinctness between properly restrictable groupings. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the requirement for restriction is improper, and respectfully request that the requirement for restriction be withdrawn.

Applicants respectfully submit that MPEP §802.01 states that inventions are independent where "they are unconnected in design, operation, and effect." This situation, except for species, is rarely present, since persons will seldom file an application containing disclosures of independent things. (emphasis added). MPEP §806.06 cites the intended meaning of independent inventions by citing specific examples of independence, stating "[a]n article of apparel, and a locomotive bearing would be an example. A process of painting a house and a process of boring a well would be a second example."

Further, MPEP §806.04 states that "[w]here the two inventions are process and apparatus, and the apparatus cannot be used to practice the process or any part thereof, they are independent." (emphasis added).

Applicants respectfully submit that the groups set forth by the Examiner cannot be considered "independent", since the specification clearly discloses the relationship between the subject matter of the claims of these groupings, and thus, the groupings are not wholly unrelated or "independent". Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the instant application is not properly restrictable, since the Examiner has not shown that the inventions are "independent" as required by the U.S. Statute.

Accordingly, in view of the above remarks, reconsideration of the requirement for restriction, and an action on all of the claims in the application, are respectfully requested.

Conclusion

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone James T. Eller, Jr., Registration No. 39,538, at (703) 205-8000, in the Washington, D.C. area.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

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